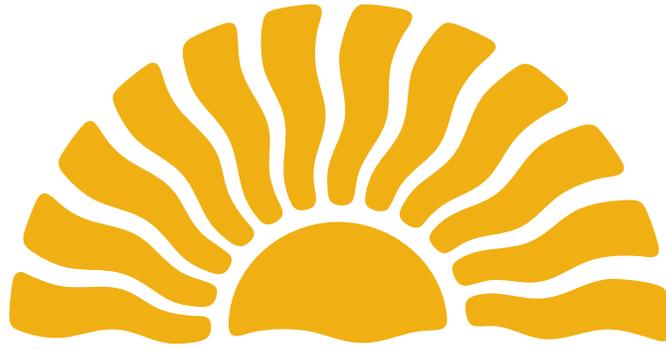




EARTH DAY '26

PARTICIPANT GUIDE



2026 PARTICIPANT PROGRAM GUIDE

Opening Prayer (2 MINUTES)

Adapted from a [Prayer to the Holy Spirit](#) Sr. Gemma Corbett/CAFOD, Used with permission

L: *O Holy Spirit, you hovered over the deep at the dawn of creation. You fashioned time and space itself in the initial magnificent flaring forth. You breathed life into all beings and you continue to dwell and work in all creation to sustain that life.*

All: Send forth thy Spirit, Lord
and renew the face of the earth.

L: *Be with us now at this critical moment of our history. Open our ears to the cry of the earth, suffering the effects of human exploitation and unbridled consumption. Open our ears to the cries of our brothers and sisters living in the midst of extreme poverty and hunger.*

All: Send forth thy Spirit, Lord
and renew the face of the earth.

L: *Give us a deeper awareness that we are part of all that you have made, that we are intimately connected to all that has been, all that is and all that will be. Grant us a spirit of awe and wonder as we contemplate the marvels of your creation, recognizing and giving thanks for your presence within and around us.*

All: Send forth thy Spirit, Lord
and renew the face of the earth.

L: *Give us a deep respect for all life and help us to renew our commitment to foster life wherever we are. Give us the courage to denounce all that disfigures your creation and to commit fully to caring for our earthly home and for all the created beings we share it with. May we live lives characterized by compassion and service and may we embody your love in our relationships with one another and with all Creation.*

All: Send forth thy Spirit, Lord
and renew the face of the earth.

Readings and Silent Reflection (20 MINUTES)

READING #1

A reading from Ephesians 3:16-19 NRSVECE

I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

READING #2:

Faith Drives Us, Sr. Joan Chittester O.S.B.

Faith drives us on, trusting in a future we cannot see but are bound to pursue if our own humanity is ever to come to the fullness creation designed it to be. No doubt about it, the prophetic vision demands more than insight alone. It demands a steel-willed determination to do something, however little, to bring that awareness to life. If the world in which we live is to be a better one, our spirituality must be about more than seeing what needs to be done. It's about standing up and speaking out, the lone voice in the room, if necessary, the voice that others ignore or laugh at. Now on the strength of our faith and the vision it drives in us, we call the faithful to see what we see, to step to its drum, to begin to raise up a new way of being alive.

SILENT REFLECTION (1 MINUTE)

These two readings focus on faith and action, especially Christ-rooted faith that like the mustard seed can move mountains. How is your faith energized so that you are filled with the fullness of God and moved to make a better world?

READING #3

From *Address of the Holy Father Leo XIV to the Participants in the "Raising Hope" Conference on the Tenth Anniversary of the Encyclical Laudato Si'*, October 1st, 2025

We must shift from collecting data to caring; and from environmental discourse to an ecological conversion that transforms both personal and communal lifestyles. For believers, this conversion is in fact no different to the one that orients us towards the living God. We cannot love God, whom we cannot see, while despising his creatures. Nor can we call ourselves disciples of Jesus Christ without participating in his outlook on creation and his care for all that is fragile and wounded...I would like to conclude with a question that concerns each of us. God will ask us if we have cultivated and cared for the world that he created (cf. Gen 2:15), for the benefit of all and for future generations, and if we have taken care of our brothers and sisters (cf. Gen 4:9; Jn 13:34). What will be our answer?

SILENT REFLECTION (1 MINUTE)

What is your answer to Pope Leo's question: Have you cultivated and cared for the world that he created for the benefit of all and for future generations, and if we have taken care of our brothers and sisters?



READING #4

From *An Invitation to Ecological Conversion for U.S. Catholics*, US Catholic Conference of Bishops, February 17, 2026

We each must recognize the power we have as individuals and in community...We must each make daily choices that reflect our conversion to better care for God's creation and the people, communities, and livelihoods that are interconnected...We invite you to prayerfully discern how you, your parish, and your community might participate in any of the actions below.

Families and individuals can purchase products from companies that prioritize care for creation and consider renewable energy sources for their homes.

Business leaders can work to increase sustainability and ensure justice towards their workers and communities in the areas surrounding their operations.

Schools can integrate care for creation into curricula.

Parishes can create opportunities for prayer in nature, offer pilgrimages, and celebrate a Mass to care for creation.

Dioceses can conduct an energy audit of the buildings they own, which can lead to energy and often cost savings. They can convene synodal listening conversations to learn more about community needs and partner locally to build climate resilience. Priests, deacons, and seminarians can receive formation about Catholic social teaching on environmental stewardship, which they can share through homilies.

Religious communities can share with others their successes in utilizing socially responsible investing practices, which work to align investments with the values of Catholic social teaching, including care for creation.

Policymakers can listen to the voices of those most impacted by environmental challenges and seek to create just policies mindful of their well-being, with an eye also to other vulnerable populations, such as workers.

Everyone has a role to play in urging leaders at all levels to convert their hearts — and establish policies to better care for God's creation.

SILENT REFLECTION (1 MINUTE)

What role can you and your faith community play in converting hearts to better care for God's creation?

Video (2-3 MINUTES)

Video: <https://youtu.be/N8R-bVObqpo>

If you are interested in learning more about Catholic Energies, your facilitator has copies of these two resources:

- Catholic Energies: How to Get Started
- Get to Know Catholic Energies

Small Group Discussion (20 MINUTES)

(Small groups of 3-5 people)

1. When we focus on eco-conversion, how is our faith strengthened and energized?
2. Catholic leaders are calling for the Church to respond to the climate and ecological crises with practical actions fueled by spiritual interior conversion. How can you and/or your community respond to the calls from Catholic leaders for eco-conversion?
3. The video presents you with one example of how to respond to the call for eco-conversion. Discuss how Catholic Energies can, through practical ecological actions, help *energize your faith community* (religious order, parish, diocese, school, etc.) and energize your spiritual faith.

Advocacy Activity (20 MINUTES)



PROTECT ENERGY AFFORDABILITY FOR FAMILIES!

Urge Congress to prioritize policies that lower energy costs for families, strengthen essential assistance programs, and invest in clean, affordable energy solutions that benefit all communities — especially those on the margins. As Pope Francis reminds us in *Laudato Si'*, care for creation is inseparable from care for the poor. [Take Action HERE](#)

Closing Prayer (3 MINUTES)

We Are Sowers, Not Saviors by Steven Salido Fisher, *Laudato Si'* Action Platform (Used with permission)

L: *This prayer is a contemporary reimagining of the Romero Prayer, originally written by the late Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw and often misattributed to Saint Óscar Romero. It was composed with those who care for our common home and all who labor quietly for ecological renewal.*

(In unison)

The healing of our common home is not only beyond our efforts; it is even beyond our sight. We accomplish in our lifetime only a small part of the great renewal that is God's work in the world. It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view of creation.

Nothing we do is complete—and that is another way of saying that the wholeness of creation always lies beyond us.

No campaign restores every forest.

No prayer cools every warming sea.

No act of solidarity mends every wound of the poor or the planet.

No gathering, however global, fulfills the dream of communion.

This is what we are about.

We plant trees whose shade we will never sit beneath.

We tend the soil that others will harvest.

We clean the waters, trusting they will flow clear again.

We join the slow work of resurrection—

the quiet mending of all that has been broken.

We cannot do everything, and there is peace in knowing that.

It frees us to do something, and to do it with love and perseverance.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning—

a step along the way—

a chance for the Spirit to breathe through our small acts

and make them more than we could imagine.

We are sowers, not saviors;

caretakers, not creators;

pilgrims on this beautiful, wounded earth—

walking together toward restoration,

trusting that God makes all things new.

